Writer to Fight Subpoena Try, Attorney Vows

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The attorney for Life magazine reporter David L. Chandler says he will fight any attempt to force his client to testify under oath before the legislative committee investigating Life's charges of Mafia influence in state government.

Cicero Sessions made the statement after the committee yesterday ended an informal questioning of Chandler, with the New Orleans writer refusing to divulge his sources of information for the April 10 Life article he authored. He was not under oath.

The committee chairman, Sen. Adrian G. Duplantier of New Orleans, said Chandler will be subpoenaed to testify under oath July 14. He also said documents provided yesterday by Chandler will not be made public unless he is willing to swear to their accuracy.

"WE ARE NOT going to be a vehicle to smearing people," said Duplaintier.

He said the stack of printed information will be studied, however, as a basis for further investigation.

Committee members repeatedly questioned Chandler about his sources of information but Sessions steadfastly refused to let him answer.

"DON'T KEEP coming to this man and asking for his informants," Sessions told the committee, meeting in a Baton Rouge city courtroom. "I'm not going to let him tell you."

The attorney indicated any subpoena of Chandler will be challenged in Federal Court in a suit which also attacks the constitutionality of the committee itself. Sessions contends anything the reporter is forced to reveal at a formal hearing would cause complications in connection with two libel suits totaling $12 million now pending against Chandler and the magazine.

The committtte resumes its investigation Tuesday, with Gov. John J. McKeithen scheduled to testify under oath. McKeithen was barred from yesterday's session at the insistence of Sessions, who previously had agreed to a 10-day legal truce in the battle over Chandler's right to avoid testifying.

THE GOVERNOR'S administrative assistant, W. W. McDougall, attended the meeting yesterday and called it "outrageous."

The sessions began with an argument over the attorney's right to bar all persons except the principals and newsmen, and the feud between Sessions and the seven-man committee never did die down.

Sessions later objected to Duplantier's referring to the proceedings as a "hearing." He said the conference was in no legal sense a hearing.

IN A PREPARED statement after the conference, Sessions said Chandler is "ready and anxious to resume the conference so that we may complete what we agreed to do. Failure for this to be accomplished certainly shall be through no unwillingness or failure to cooperate to carry out the agreement so far as we are concerned."

Sessions criticized Duplantier's refusal to release the documents supplied by Chandler. "I know why they don't want to release those documents and it's not because they don't want to do David Chandler any favors. There are some pretty explosive things in those documents."

He said the main targets of the federal investigation will be members of the Mafia and their associates, racketeering labor and management officials and corrupt politicians.

The New Orleans team, which has an eight-year lease on its headquarters at 526 St. Louis, is one of 20 such groups in the nation planned by the Justice Department and the 13th to be set up so far.

Disorders Flare Up in New York

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